

# Parent and Family Engagement Services

## Summary Report, 2015-2016

### Overview

Austin Independent School District (AISD) has staff to provide community and parent engagement support to families of students attending its schools. AISD's Department of Communication and Community Engagement staff coordinates many of these support activities. AISD employed parent support specialists (PSSs) at most of its elementary, middle and high schools during the 2015–2016 school year. Annually, AISD conducts a parent survey, as well as staff and student surveys, to gather critical stakeholder feedback on the climate of the schools. This report summarizes some of the parent and family engagement services provided by PSSs to parents and families at their schools during the 2015-2016 school year, as recorded in eCST, one of the district's data systems for recording student/family services. These data do not represent all the parent and family services provided by the PSSs during the 2015–2016 school year. In addition, this report highlights a few results from 2016 district surveys of parents and staff.

### Parent and Family Support Services

AISD's Parent Engagement Support Office (PESO) staff provide a variety of services across the district (<https://www.austinisd.org/parentsupport>). Examples of these services include parent and family engagement support to schools, communication and outreach to families and community members, parent and family education opportunities (e.g., workshops), and professional development sessions for AISD staff. During 2015–2016, PESO staff provided trainings on Karen Mapp's dual capacity building model for school-family partnerships (<https://www.gse.harvard.edu/news/uk/14/11/building-capacity-family-engagement>) to 607 parents, and these trainings continued into the next school year (some parents may have attended more than one event). PESO staff also provide guidance and training to schools' PSSs. AISD's Family and School Support Team (FASST) provide support and training to parents of students receiving special education services (<https://www.austinisd.org/academics/sped/family>), and during 2015–2016, the FASST team provided training and support to more than 363 parents and staff (some parents may have attended more than one event), and these trainings continued into the next school year.

For every service that PSSs provided or supported during 2015–2016, PSSs were asked to record in the district's eCST data entry system the numbers of parents or guardians served, and of these, the numbers who increased their knowledge or skills as a result of these services or activities. PSSs used sign-in sheets to record numbers served, and they often used activity outcome surveys or other sources of information to determine the impact of the services or activities. AISD PSSs provided support to an unduplicated count of 19,471 parents or guardians served during 2015–2016.



Life skills and parent education were the main categories of services and activities recorded. **For 2015–2016, 23,734 parents or guardians were recorded as having participated in life skills activities, and 96% were recorded as having increased their life skills; 75,358 parents or guardians participated in parent education activities, and 95% were recorded as having increased their knowledge.** These counts may include some duplications if the same parents went to more than one event. In a few cases, data entry errors occurred when numbers served were entered for numbers who increased their knowledge or skills. In such cases, the data were corrected to ensure numbers who increased their knowledge or skills were less than or equal to the numbers served.

## AISD Parent and Staff Surveys, Spring 2016

Annually, AISD staff in the Department of Research and Evaluation (DRE) coordinate a district-wide parent survey that is made available to all parents (in at least five languages) by distributing scannable survey documents through schools to parents and making a web-based version of the survey available on the district's web page ([www.austinisd.org](http://www.austinisd.org)). The Spring 2016 AISD Parent Survey results showed that of the 18,897 parents who responded (representing 23% of enrolled students), almost all respondents agreed that school staff (e.g., principals, assistant principals, teachers, counselors) treated them with courtesy and respect, and welcomed their involvement in their child's education ([https://www.austinisd.org/sites/default/files/dre-surveys/15.35\\_2015-2016\\_AISD\\_Parent\\_Survey\\_District\\_Report\\_2.pdf](https://www.austinisd.org/sites/default/files/dre-surveys/15.35_2015-2016_AISD_Parent_Survey_District_Report_2.pdf)).

Annually, AISD DRE staff also administer the Teaching, Empowering, Learning and Leading (TELL) Survey to school staff so they can provide feedback about their school teaching and learning conditions ([https://www.austinisd.org/sites/default/files/dre-surveys/DRE\\_15.29\\_Teaching\\_Empowering\\_Leading\\_and\\_Learning\\_AISD\\_Survey\\_2011\\_through\\_2016\\_0.pdf](https://www.austinisd.org/sites/default/files/dre-surveys/DRE_15.29_Teaching_Empowering_Leading_and_Learning_AISD_Survey_2011_through_2016_0.pdf)). One section of the survey asks staff to respond to community engagement questions. In the Spring 2016 survey, when staff were asked about whether parents and guardians were influential decision makers in their schools, 80% of elementary school staff, 67% of middle school staff, and 73% of high school staff agreed.

## Conclusion

AISD provides a variety of parent and family engagement support services on an annual basis to family members of students enrolled at each grade level. These services are part of the district's mission to provide a comprehensive, high-quality, engaging educational experience for all students, which is part of the district's core vision of reinventing the urban school experience (<https://www.austinisd.org/about-us>).

## Parent and Family Engagement: Federal, State, and Local Policies

Parent and family engagement is part of AISD policy at the local, state, and federal levels. The AISD board of trustees adopted district policy (Local GK) states that the district's mission is to provide, in partnership with parents and the community, a comprehensive educational experience that is high quality and challenging for all students (<http://pol.tasb.org/Policy/Code/1146?filter=GK>).

The State of Texas also has requirements for reporting community and student engagement data as part of the broader state accountability system ([http://tea.texas.gov/About\\_TEA/Laws\\_and\\_Rules/Commissioner\\_Rules\\_\(TAC\)/Adopted/14\\_06\\_Adopted\\_New\\_19\\_TAC\\_%C2%A761\\_1023/](http://tea.texas.gov/About_TEA/Laws_and_Rules/Commissioner_Rules_(TAC)/Adopted/14_06_Adopted_New_19_TAC_%C2%A761_1023/)).

At the federal level, any school district that receives federal funding must provide opportunities and support for parent and family engagement, communication, and support (<https://www2.ed.gov/documents/essa-act-of-1965.pdf>).

Parent and family engagement data are used by AISD for various reporting and compliance purposes.

